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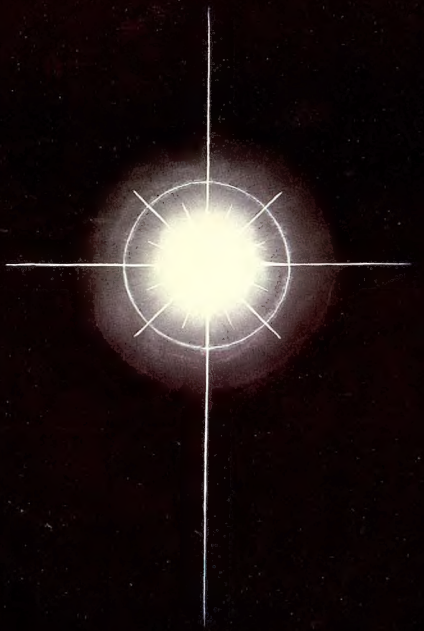
CEREBUS



109
APR

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

In anticipation of doing "Walking on the Moon" inspired by the Judge in Jules Feiffer's **Little Murders**, I have been surrounding myself with Feiffer Totems . . . **Passionella and Other Stories** including "George's Moon" a major inspiration for Book Seven, the original stage play of **Little Murders** (which Steve Bissette loaned to me and is never getting back. Sorry, Steve), **Sick, Sick, Sick** an early Feiffer collection, **the Lonely Machine** and **Hostileman** (the best comic book work ever published in **Playboy**) and, most significantly, Feiffer's interview in the September 1971 issue of Playboy.

It was the first issue of Playboy I ever bought for myself . . . all of fifteen years old I was. At that time a dollar would buy five comic books, so it was quite an investment. It had Gilbert Shelton's Feds and Heds game in it, fiction by Irwin Shaw, Kurtzman's **Annie Fannie**.

But the highlight was the Feiffer interview.

Everything a fifteen year old needed to know about the world is contained in it. He talks about dope, getting laid, not getting laid, Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson, random violence, politics, the snob appeal of the Village Voice. It is amazing to see how much history has come-to-pass exactly as he envisioned it; how many insights he had into the workings of the American political system . . . insights that would have been dismissed as leftlib paranoia at the time (remember this was a year before Watergate) but which have gradually become conventional wisdom; common sense.

I owe an enormous debt because he answered all of the questions I had about being a grown-up and being creative for a living. The story that sticks in every comic fan's mind about Jules Feiffer is the one he relates in his wonderful book **The Great Comic Book Heroes**. He describes going to work for Will Eisner as an assistant. One of his first tasks was to sign "Will Eisner" to the stories and (everybody on three) he was instantly better at it than Eisner was.

I think more than anything else, this was a major leg up for a lot of would-be Eisner's. He took the fannish delight in duplicating an idol's signature (to this day when people ask me if I'll sign their counterfeit Cerebus No. 1, I offer them a choice of Neal Adams or Frank Frazetta) and raised it from a petty ego-thing to a rich and on-going tradition.

That Feiffer became Feiffer and not a substitute Eisner is important as well, because it ended the traditional master/apprentice relationship. A teen-aged Feiffer could seek out Will Eisner Studios and offer to do any kind of work, just to be able to **be** there; to **learn**. The teen-age Dave Sim had no such option. What could I do for Feiffer? He drew his own stuff. He wrote his own stuff. He lettered his own stuff. The rest of the time he wrote novels, plays. He was self-contained.

So **I** became self-contained.

And in large measure, it was because of that interview and the clarity of vision that shone through. It ends with Feiffer saying he hoped his comments wouldn't lead anyone to despair. In my case, nothing could be further from the truth and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him publicly. Words are inadequate to describe my admiration. Suffice to say his work and his success, to me, represent **the** high water mark in the comic book medium.

Hell.

When I'm done **Cerebus** I'll probably write a play.

Dave Sim will attend Memphis Mini-Con, June 18-19, Wilson World Hotel, Memphis, TN.

CEREBUS

No. 109 **APRIL 1988**

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Backgrounds, cover-colour, and tones

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

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32,000

HIGH TIDES
* * * * *

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BUD PLANT (Warehouse #7)

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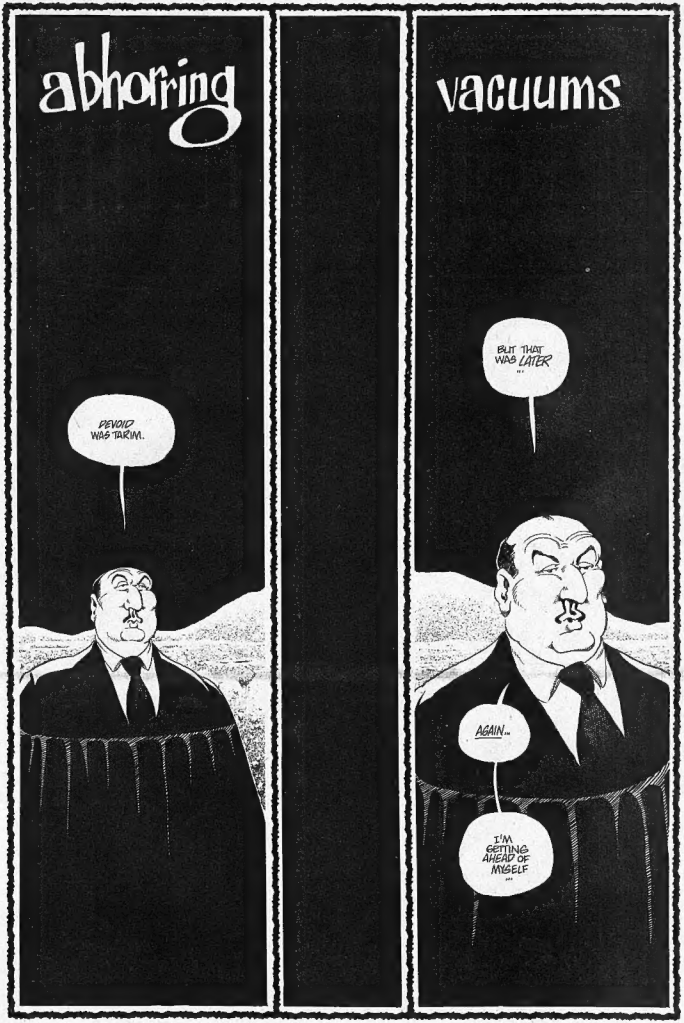
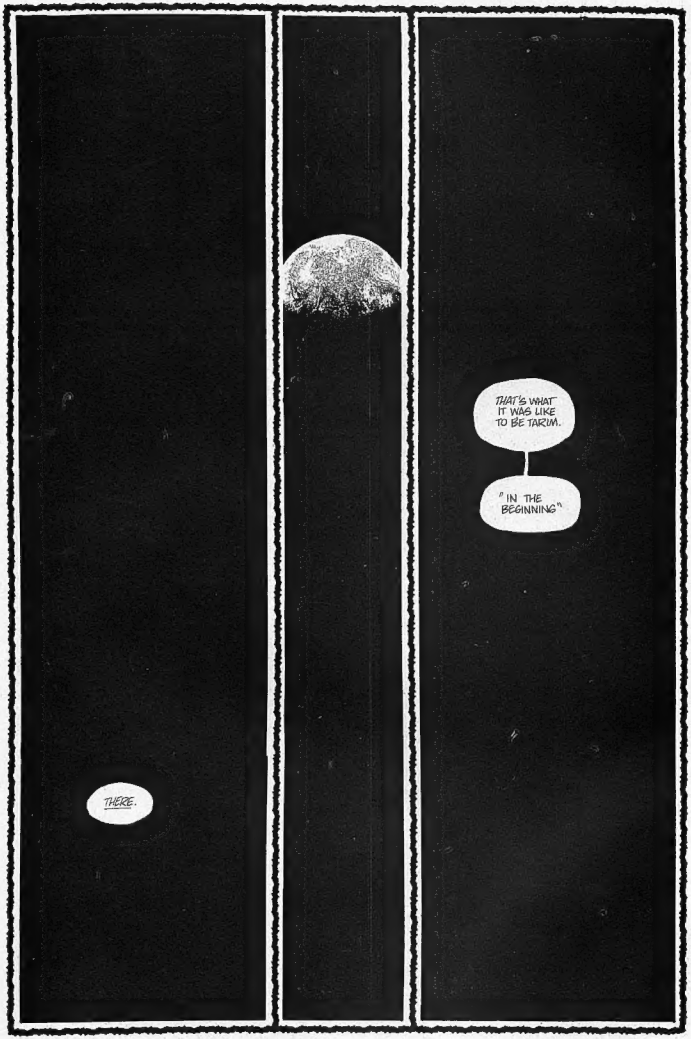
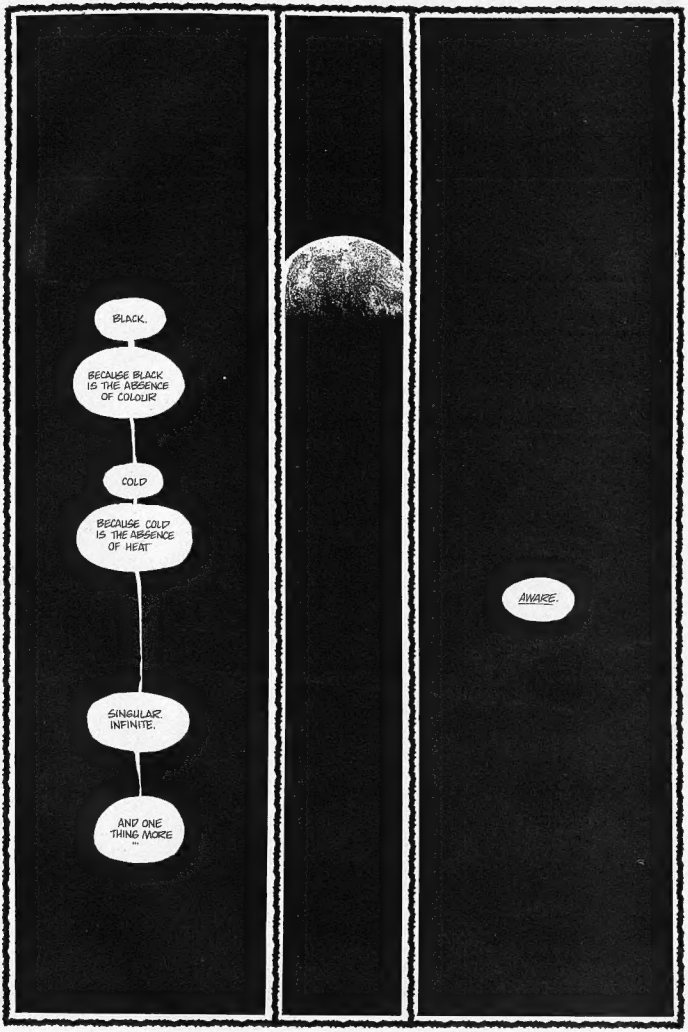

abhorring
BEYOND WAS TARIM.
vacuums
BUT THAT WAS LATER ...
AGAIN...
I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF ...

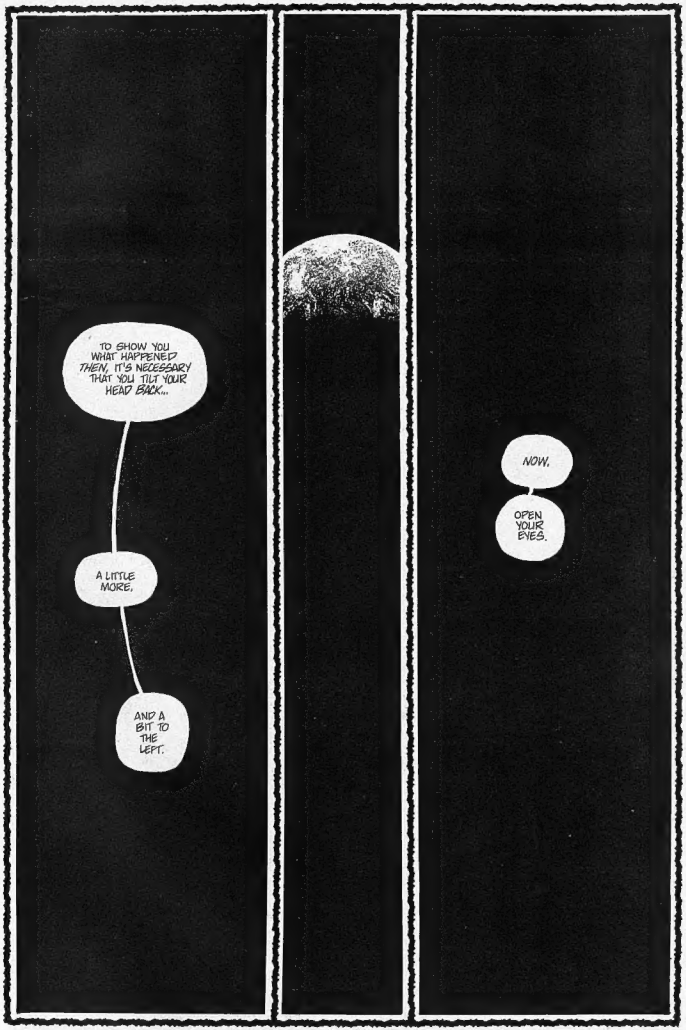
...FOR UNTOLD GENERATIONS BETWEEN THEM, THE REDWOODS AND MANKIND HAVE CONTEMPLATED, AND SPECULATED ON, THE NATURE OF TARIM...
WHY?
SO THAT THEY MIGHT FEEL THEMSELVES AS ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE?
SO THEY MIGHT HAVE A GREATER BOND WITH THEIR FELLOW TREE AND FELLOW MAN?
NOT ON YOUR SWEET LIFE.
THEY CONTEMPLATE HIM, BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE HIM.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE TARIM?
CLOSE YOUR EYES.

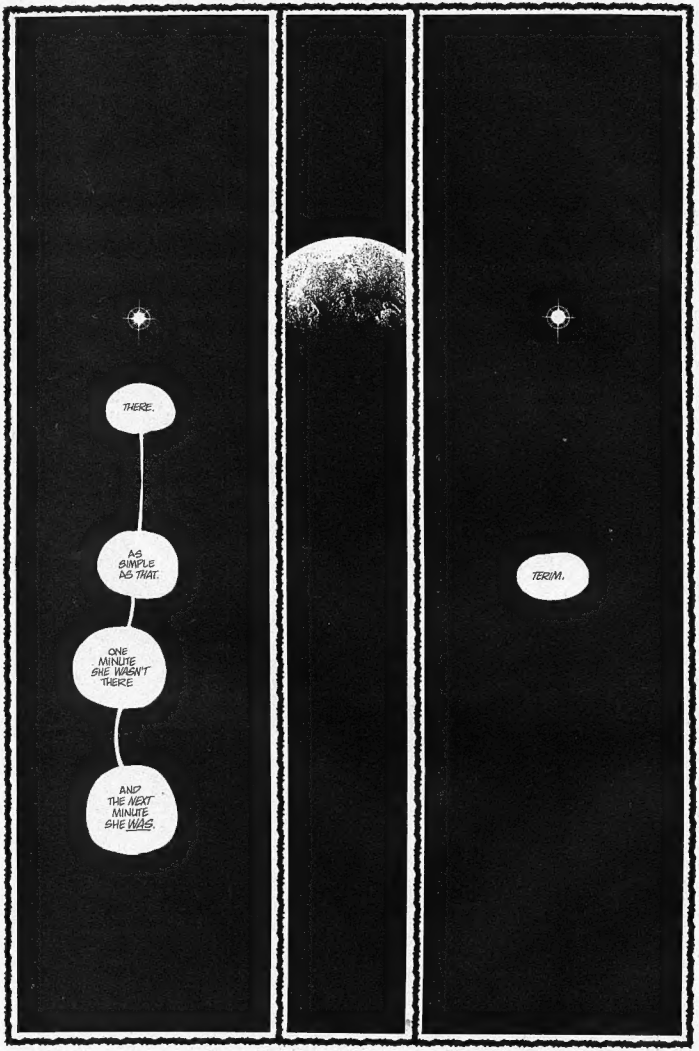
WHEN I'M SPEAKING MERELY FOR RHETORICAL EFFECT...
MY VOICE GOES UP AT THE END
PLEASE...
CLOSE YOUR EYES

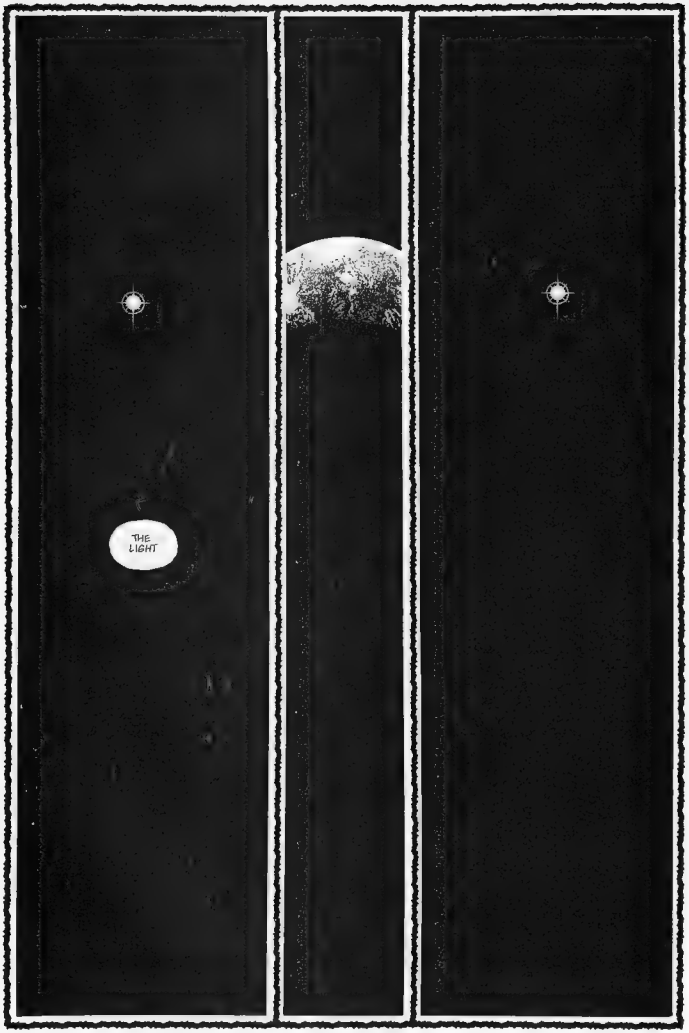

THAT'S WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE TARIM.
"IN THE BEGINNING"
THERE.

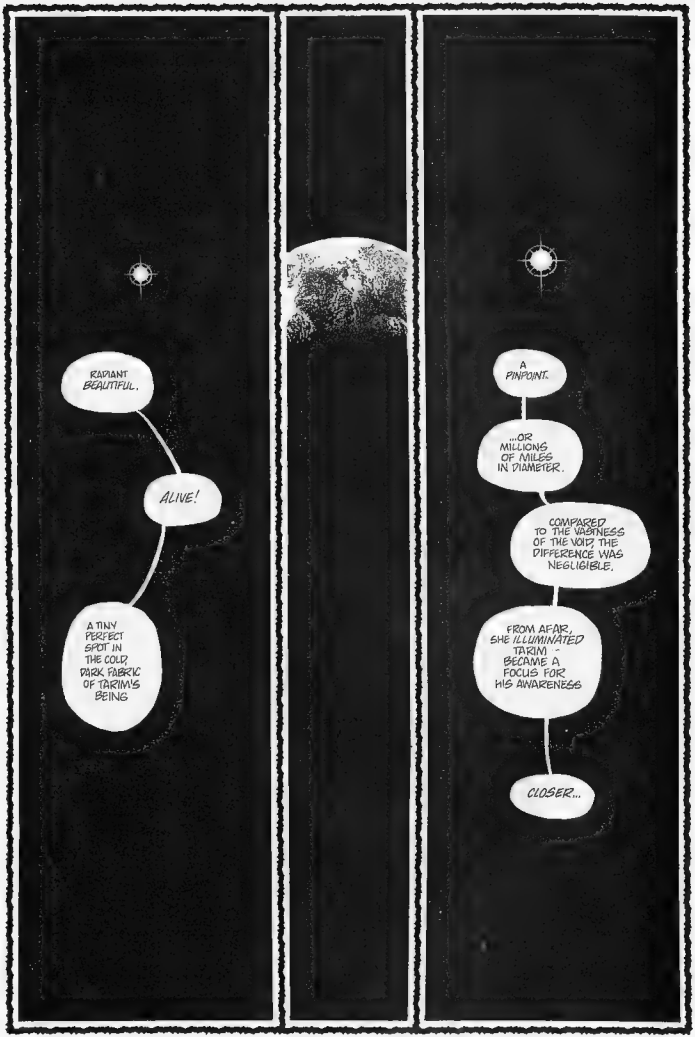

BLACK.
BECAUSE BLACK IS THE ABSENCE OF COLOUR
COLD
BECAUSE COLD IS THE ABSENCE OF HEAT
SINGULAR. INFINITE.
AND ONE THING MORE ...
AWARE.

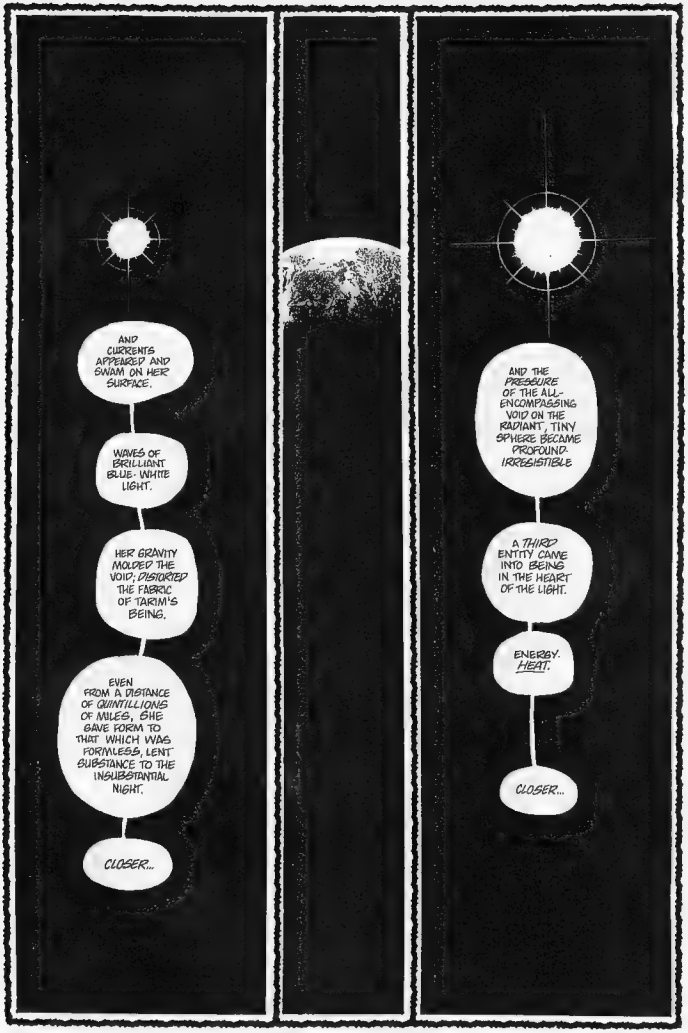
FROM THE NEARLY INFINITE GAPS OF TRILLIONS UPON TRILLIONS OF SPHEROID MILES BETWEEN STARS... THE MEASUREMENT OF VOLUME WHEN THERE'S NO LENGTH AND NO HEIGHT AND NO BREADTH...
TO THE INFINITESIMAL SPACE BETWEEN THE NUCLEI AND THE ELECTRONS WHICH MAKE UP THE SMALLEST COMPONENTS OF THE AIR YOU BREATHE, ALL THAT YOU SEE, AND THE MATERIALS OF YOUR FLESH, BLOOD, AND IN YOUR CASE, FUR...
ACROSS THE ENDLESS REACHES OF THE MACROCOSMIC AND THE MICROCOSMIC MULTIVERSE
THE VOID THINKS WITH A SINGLE MIND.
THAT SINGLE MIND IS TARIM.
CLOSE YOUR EYES.
I'M NOT FINISHED.

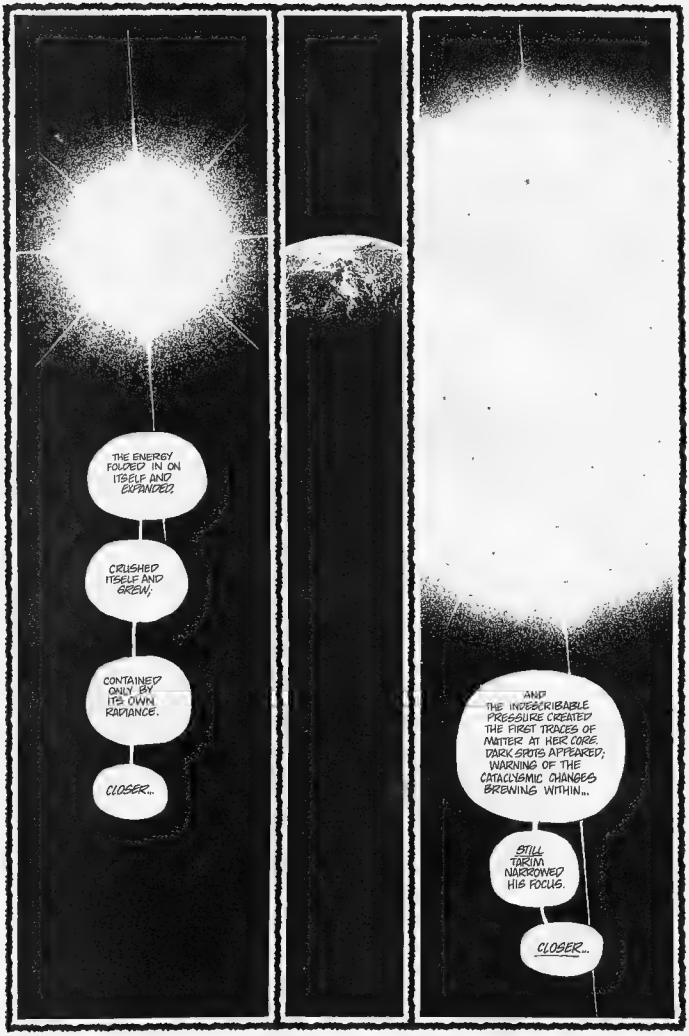

TO SHOW YOU WHAT HAPPENED *THEN*, IT'S NECESSARY THAT YOU TILT YOUR HEAD *BACK*...
A LITTLE MORE.
AND A BIT TO THE LEFT.
NOW.
OPEN YOUR EYES.

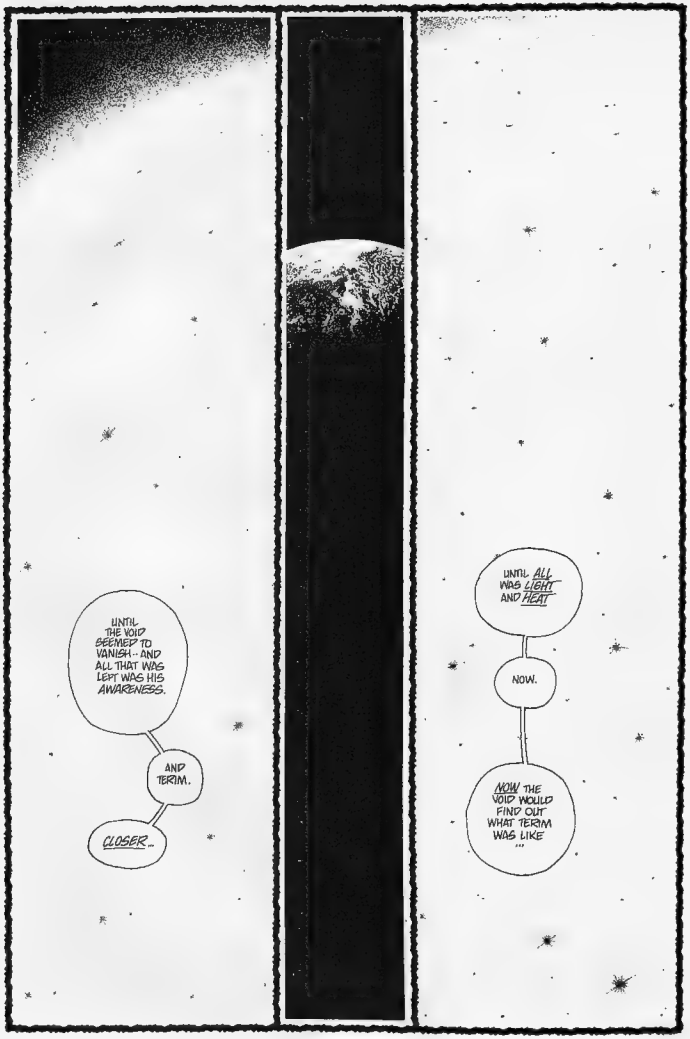

THERE.
AS SIMPLE AS THAT.
ONE MINUTE SHE WASN'T THERE
AND THE NEXT MINUTE SHE WAS.
TERI'M.

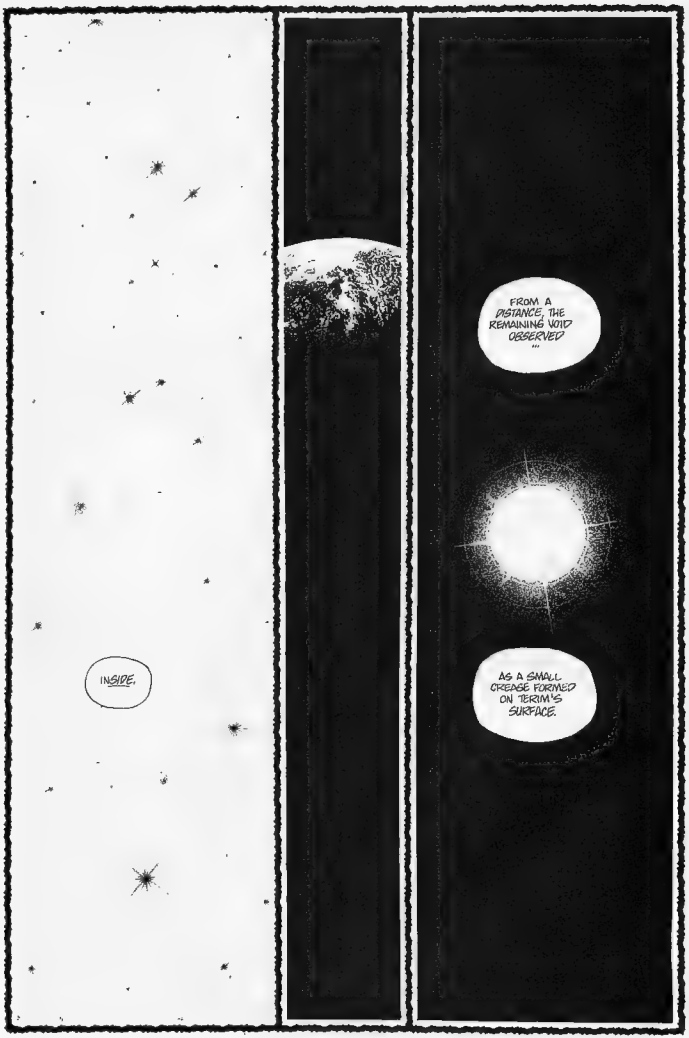

THE LIGHT

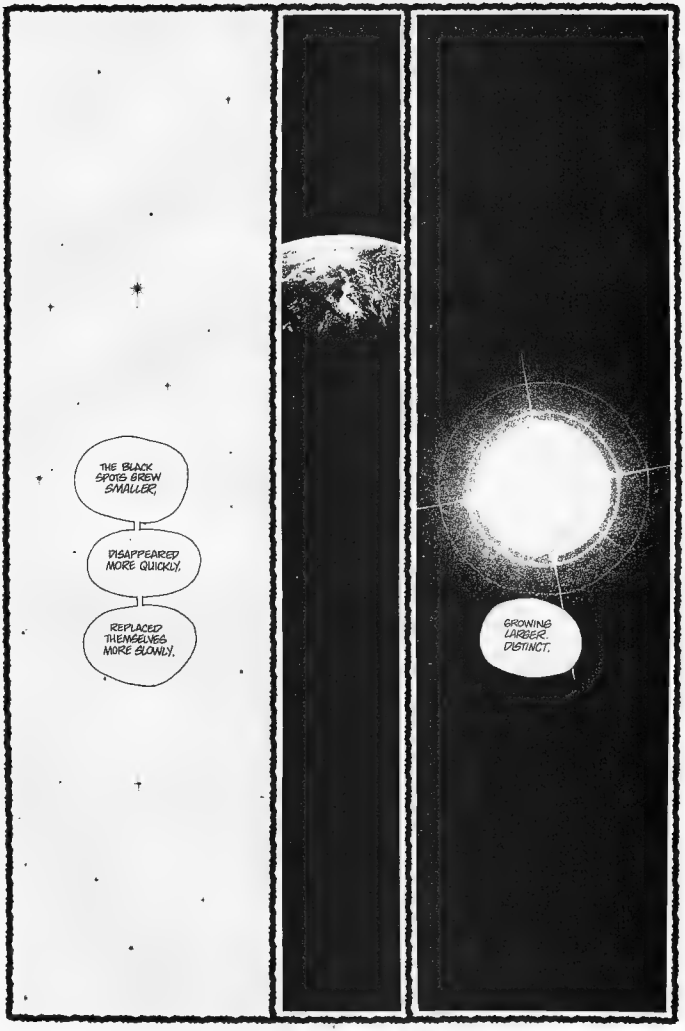

A TINY PERFECT SPOT IN THE COLD DARK FABRIC OF TARIM'S BEING
RADIANT BEAUTIFUL.
ALIVE!
A PINPOINT.
...OR MILLIONS OF MILES IN DIAMETER.
COMPARED TO THE VASTNESS OF THE VOID, THE DIFFERENCE WAS NEGLIGIBLE.
FROM AFAR, SHE ILLUMINATED TARIM - BECAME A FOCUS FOR HIS AWARENESS
CLOSER...

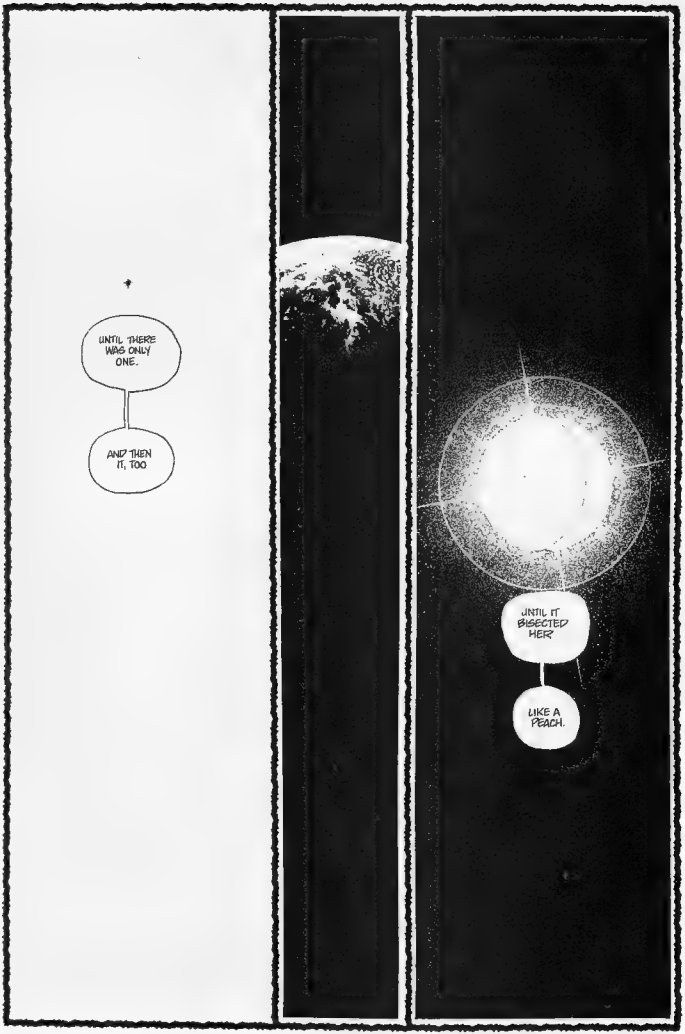

AND CURRENTS APPEARED AND SWAM ON HER SURFACE.
WAVES OF BRILLIANT BLUE-WHITE LIGHT.
HER GRAVITY MOLDED THE VOID; DISTORTED THE FABRIC OF TARIM'S BEING.
EVEN FROM A DISTANCE OF QUINTILLIONS OF MILES, SHE GAVE FORM TO THAT WHICH WAS FORMLESS, LENT SUBSTANCE TO THE INSUBSTANTIAL NIGHT.
CLOSER...
AND THE PRESSURE OF THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING VOID ON THE RADIANT, TINY SPHERE BECAME PROFOUND. IRRESISTIBLE
A THIRD ENTITY CAME INTO BEING IN THE HEART OF THE LIGHT.
ENERGY. HEAT.
CLOSER...

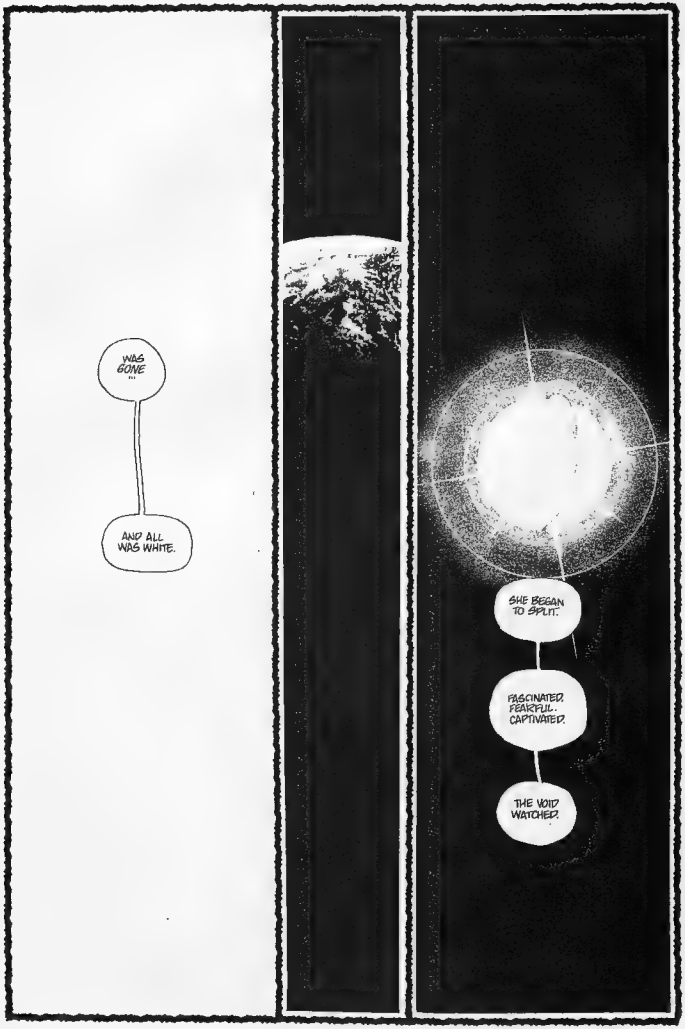

THE ENERGY FOLDED IN ON ITSELF AND EXPANDED.
CRUSHED ITSELF AND GREW;
CONTAINED ONLY BY ITS OWN RADIANCE.
CLOSER..
AND THE INDESCRIBABLE PRESSURE CREATED THE FIRST TRACES OF MATTER AT HER CORE. DARK SPOTS APPEARED; WARNING OF THE CATACLYSMIC CHANGES BREWING WITHIN..
STILL TARJIN NARROWED HIS FOCUS.
CLOSER..

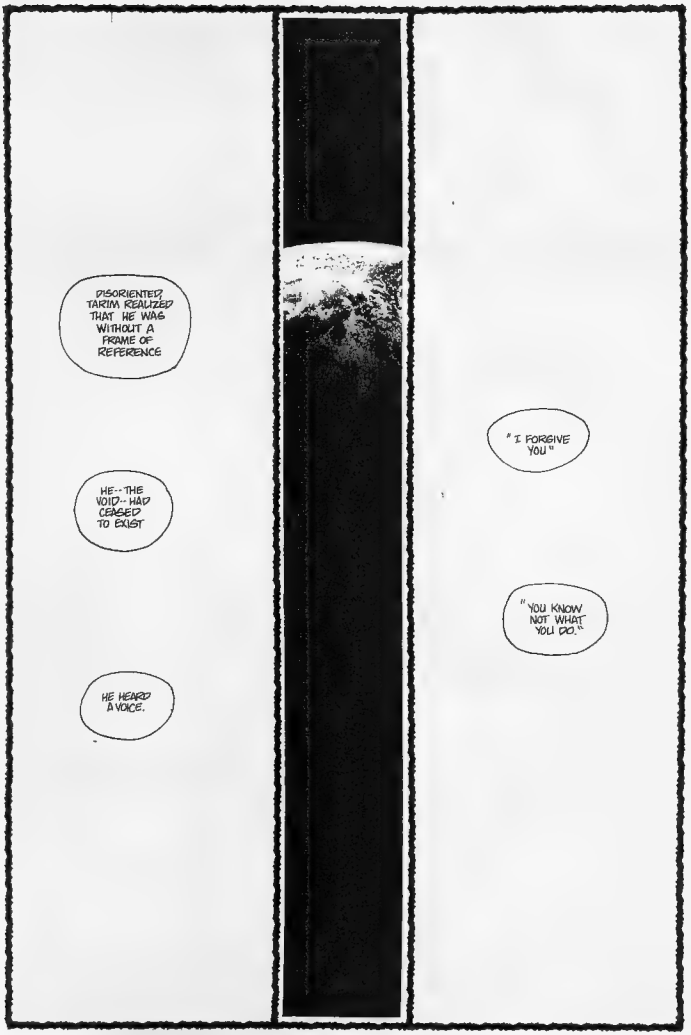

UNTIL THE VOID SEEMED TO VANISH -- AND ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS HIS AWARENESS.
AND TERIM.
CLOSER...
UNTIL ALL WAS LIGHT AND HEAT
NOW.
NOW THE VOID WOULD FIND OUT WHAT TERIM WAS LIKE ...

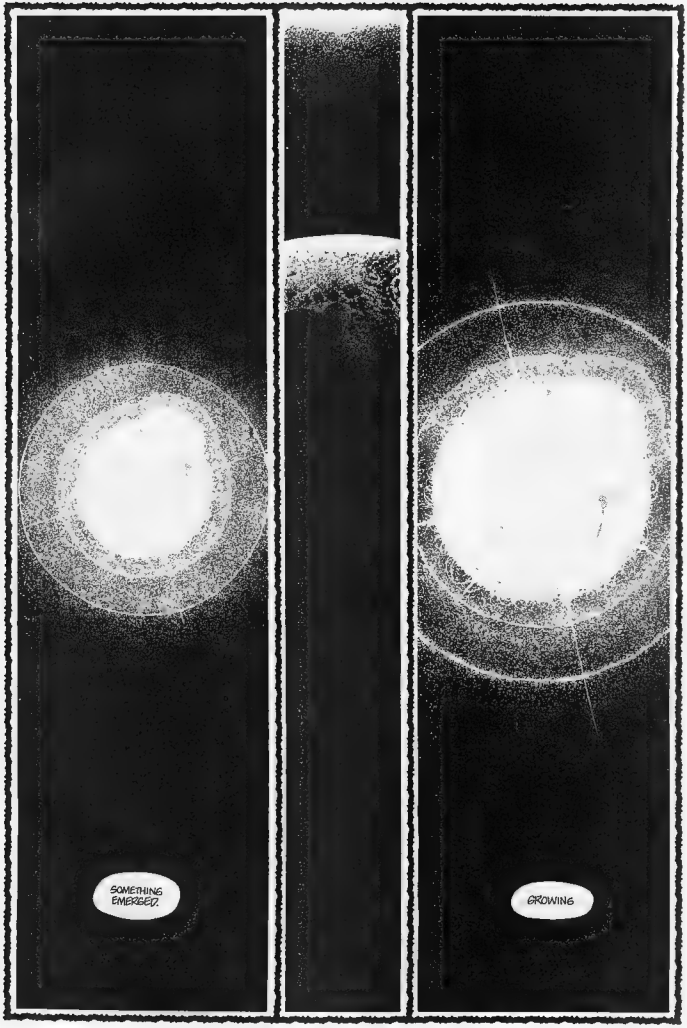

INSIDE.
FROM A DISTANCE, THE REMAINING VOID OBSERVED ...
AS A SMALL CREASE FORMED ON TERIM'S SURFACE.

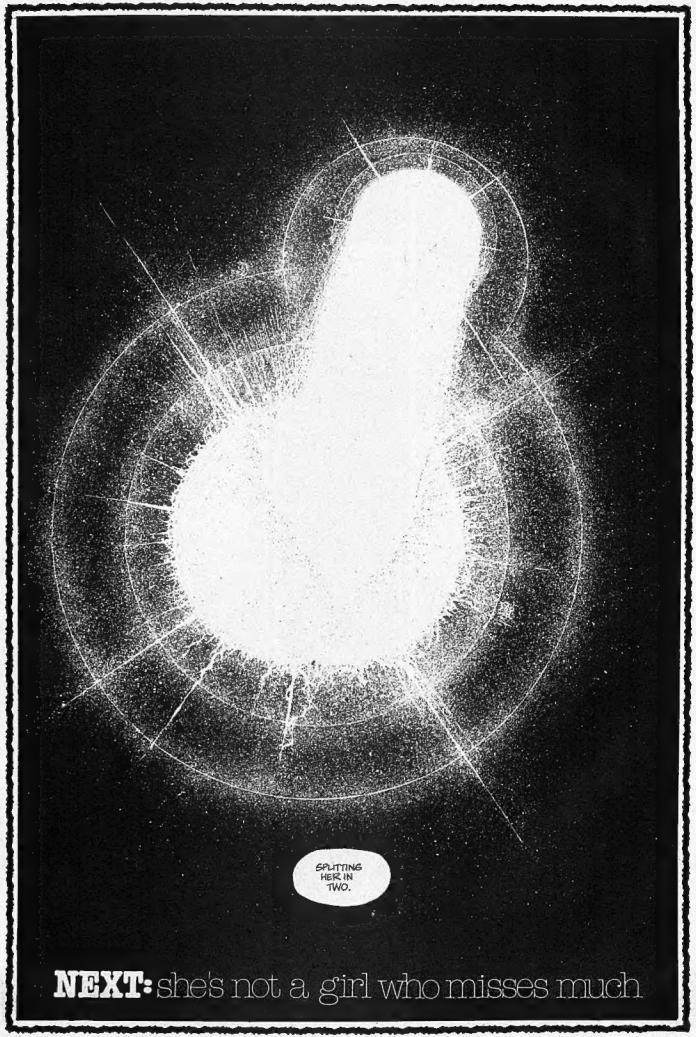

THE BLACK SPOTS GREW SMALLER,
DISAPPEARED MORE QUICKLY,
REPLACED THEMSELVES MORE SLOWLY.
GROWING LARGER. DISTINCT.


UNTIL THERE WAS ONLY ONE.
AND THEN IT, TOO
UNTIL IT BISECTED HER
LIKE A PEACH.


WAS GONE ...
AND ALL WAS WHITE.
SHE BEGAN TO SPLIT.
FASCINATED. FEARFUL. CAPTIVATED.
THE VOID WATCHED.


DISORIENTED, TARIM REALIZED THAT HE WAS WITHOUT A FRAME OF REFERENCE
HE-- THE VOID-- HAD CEASED TO EXIST
HE HEARD A VOICE.
" I FORGIVE YOU "
" YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU DO. "


SOMETHING EMERGED.
GROWING



NEXT: she's not a girl who misses much

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G4R2

Dear Dave & Gerhard,

CEREBUS 100 was great!!!!

I especially liked the borders/ surrounds that were repeated on nearly every page. I really like this constant change of panel framing you use. The first page was wonderful too.

Making this issue nearly an hour read, as though there were a lot more ideas/ guts to take in than usual. If I remember rightly, the last page immediately reminded me of elephants. You must get really pissed off with everyone interpreting all their own little ideas into CEREBUS!

T. Fobbs
Brighton, England

I just think of it as thirty-thousand little blow-jobs urging me to let go.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

Hey, how 'bout this quote from Norman Mailer's **The Armies of the Night**? To wit: "Mailer had the most developed sense of image; if not, he would have been a figure of deficiency, for people had been regarding him by his public image since he was twenty-five years old. He had in fact learned to live in the sarcophagus of his image — at night, in his sleep, he might dart out, and paint improvements on the sarcophagus. During the day, while he was helpless, newspapermen and other assorted bravos of the media and literary world would carve ugly pictures on the living tomb of his legend. Of necessity, part of Mailer's remaining friends of sensitivity went right into the war of supporting his image and working for it. Sometimes he thought his relation to this image was not unlike some poor fellow who strains his very testicles to bring in emoluments for his wife yet is never favored with carnal knowledge of her."

Woo!

A few weeks after reading that, I was struck hard by Denise Ozker's letter in #102. It was the best letter ever printed in Cerebus; appropriately enough, it was in the best issue of Cerebus (or at least the most impressive so far).

It really is a problem for those of us who would like to write you serious letters of comment, when we don't know whether we'll reach the Author of Cerebus or the Director of Recreational Activites (i.e., editor of Aardvark Comment).If we knew how to get a letter answered by one or the other, the serious letter-writers would be more willing to put out our hour (or more) of thought and our 22¢.

On the other hand there are probably a lot of thrillseekers who write in **because** they don't know whether the Author or the Smartass will answer. It's a great temptation, I admit. And, as you have said, you are in complete control of this empire. I wouldn't have it any other way — it's been worth every dime, and then some, of the bucks I've paid out for **Swords** and #26-102 and the animated portfolio and the Diamondback Deck and the sketch you did in '84 of Cerebus tickling Fleagle McGrew. I look forward to the next 198 issues and all that's associated with them.

But for Christsakes, won't you just acknowledge the frustration some of us feel at not being able to speak directly to the Author sometimes?

Sincerely,

Rusty Crump
P.O. Box 620,
Saltillo, MS., 38866

Hey, douche-bag, your shoes are untied (I'm awfully sorry, but I couldn't resist).

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I am very sorry that I said that Cerebus threw the baby off the roof. ("Shriek") Maybe the baby-tossing bothered me more than I thought, for me to misremember it so . . . or maybe I just have leaky brains. Anyway, please excuse me.

(Gorgeous moon, Gerhard.)

Sincerely,

Carolyn (Ethel/Fred) Hill
2410 Dwight Way #8
Berkeley, CA., 94704

P.S. Just in case I am once again making assumptions that I should not make: I'm the female "what do you think about the rape scene?" respondent who said that it didn't bother me when Cerebus threw the baby off the roof. It certainly **did** bother me to read #105 and Cerebus' stern correction that it was the cripple, not the baby, who got tossed off the roof: I was wincing and groaning and afraid to turn the page, feeling like an idiot, certain that I have, by my error, undermined the validity of my response. But you made me feel better when you let Fred/Ethel/X (not his/ her/its name? apologies, apologies!) reply to Cerebus' admonishment, "So much for attempting to involve you intellectually in the issue at hand . . ." (I assure you, however, that this sort of self-justification was not **my** reaction to Cerebus' glower. I am properly chastised.)

Aw, c'mon, Carolyn. Don't feed me straight lines like "I am properly chastised."

★★★★★★★★★★

Hi, hi, hi there Dave,

Slooshy these slovos: **CEREBUS** is the most horrorshow comic around! Even though most bee and double-yew comics need a lot of pol or the old ultra-violence to be horrorshow, Cerebus does not. The art is nice to viddy and is as clear as an azure sky in deepest summer. The raskazz has skorry pacing and is interessovating, as are many other veshches, O brother! Issue #104 ("This Flame, This Carrot") was especially horrorshow, my droog, and well worth the old polly! Dost thou do thy own lettering?

By the way, I was a real bratchny once, because I govoreeted (by means of a malenky letter) to Karen McKiel that I wished to kupet copies of **Church & State Vol. 1** and **Cerebus Book 1**. The dear ptitsa sent me a personal reply govoreeting how I could acquire these books, yet I never kuppetted them, due to a lack of pretty polly. I feel really baddiwad that I put her through all that cal, so, my deepest appy polly loggies to thou, Karen, O dear, horrorshow, cheena, thou! I shall kupet them someday, though.

Finally, Dave, O humble narrator, for all those nadsat sharries who govoreet that thou art nadmenny (among other veshches); slooshy this: have a kick in your pan-handled yarbles! Welly, welly, welly, well . . . I'll be off now . . .

Curtis Tsui
225 Annhurst Drive,
Danville, VA., 24540

A little horrorshow soviet, o malenky malchick. No more pan-handles in the oldy Aardywark Ommentca or we're all off to the Staja, skorry-like.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Okay, I have it all figured out. What Cerebus is in your fantasy world, **you** are in the real world! Much as the ego-maniacal Cerebus would, you plaster your picture on the back of every

issue. Usually, you are depicted, like Cerebus, drinking, pillaging, sexing... whatever. On the inside front, we have nothing less than "Note from the PRESIDENT"! The letters page, of course, is where all your Cerebus-like qualities are most prominently showcased. You rant, you cut up everyone — even people full of praise — you condescend, you invite all the women letter-writers to come over and fuck you and expect results, you think only of yourself, and you mercilessly abuse everyone who has the poor dumb naivete to wander on in — and best of all, just like in **Cerebus**, the fantasy, they all respond by making you obscenely rich! In both Cerebus, the fantasy, and Cerebus, the ruthlessly well-managed business, you are successfully expounding a fairly accurate analysis of human politics and economics. While talking about it in the fantasy, you are proving your thesis in the real world. So, while I was at first annoyed when you started sticking your mug on the back of my favorite comic every month, I now realize that it is an important and integral part of the fine work you are creating, a brilliant exposition of egomania and vice. Keep up the good work!

(Hell, do you realize that if you weren't such an egomaniac, the damn thing probably wouldn't even be called **Cerebus**, since it's about a whole world besides Cerebus?) Since I so thoroughly explained your puzzling and annoying behavior, entirely without prompting, do I qualify for a No-Prize? Oh, come on, **please**? Pleeeeeease? P-p-pretty-pretty puh-puhleeeeeeeeeez?

Excelsior!

Nicholas Levis
36-08 29th St., Apt. 2-L,
Astoria, NY., 11106
"I like crank mail"

PS — Please find enclosed a check for $5000. This represents almost all of my life savings. I kept only the tiniest fraction of my labours, o masterful one, and this only for my grandmother's chemotherapy and my father's leg operation. Please be merciful, o great one.

You know, I don't even feel guilty for keeping the five grand?

****

Gerhard & Dave

I don't know what you guys are doing, but every time I touch the black covers of Cerebus the natural oils in my skin seep into the cover.

I have a theory...

Massive #'s of issues are being stored away so everyone else can't have mint copies unless they wear gloves while reading or buy two issues.

One for reading, one for collecting. So if they become valuable you can sell your hoarded stock and retire early. If they don't, people have to buy two anyhow, so you make out either way. What's the story?

Oh by the way, I just looked at where I thought the natural oils sunk in and they disappeared.

Sorry for the inconvenience, too much hashish I guess...

Keep up the great work.

Michael McGloin
638 Congress St.,
Portland, ME., 04101

I just had this horrible vision of all the natural fan oils that have been absorbed by Cerebus covers. Brr.

****

Dave,

You are just over one third of the way there. Are you going to make it? When you do I'll buy you a cake.

T. Josephson
210 Jupiter Ct.,
Kelowna, B.C.
V1X 5W5

At last. Motivation.

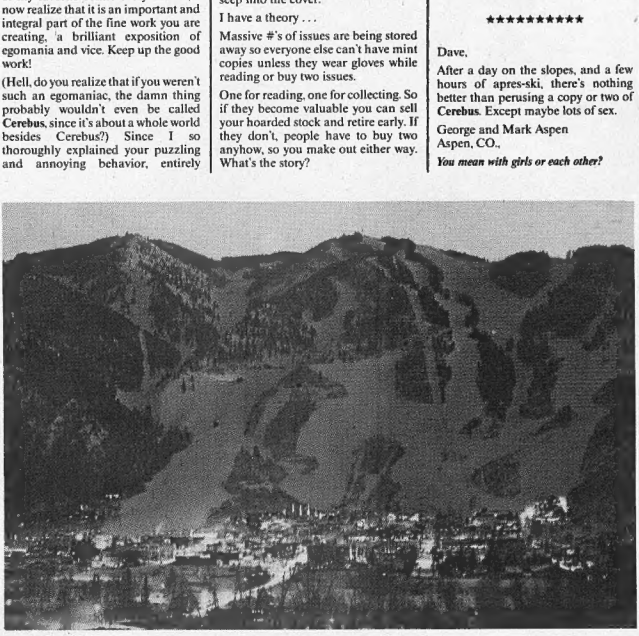
****

Dave,

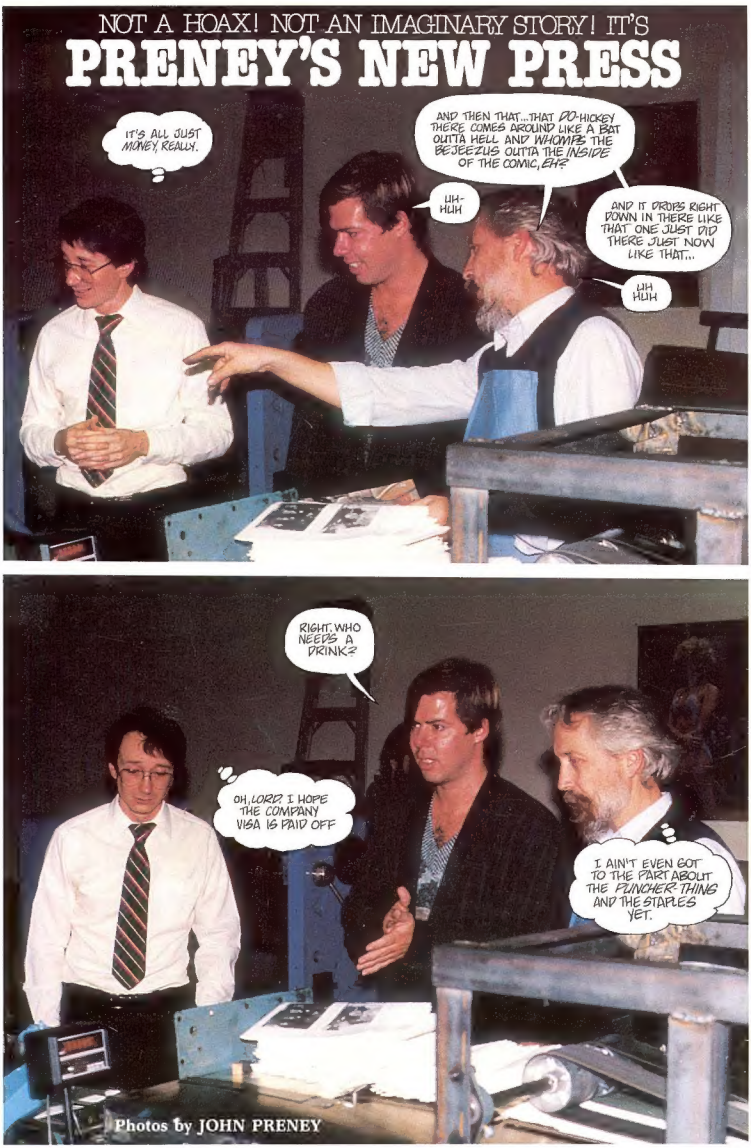
After a day on the slopes, and a few hours of apres-ski, there's nothing better than perusing a copy or two of **Cerebus**. Except maybe lots of sex.

George and Mark Aspen
Aspen, CO.,

You mean with girls or each other?



Aspen, Colorado home of super-fans George and Mark Aspen.


NOT A HOAX! NOT AN IMAGINARY STORY! IT'S
PRENEY'S NEW PRESS
IT'S ALL JUST MONEY, REALLY.
AND THEN THAT...THAT DO-HICKEY THERE COMES AROUND LIKE A BAT OUTTA HELL AND WHOMPS THE BEJEEZUS OUTTA THE INSIDE OF THE COMIC, EH?
UH-HUH
AND IT DROPS RIGHT DOWN IN THERE LIKE THAT ONE JUST DID THERE JUST NOW LIKE THAT...
UH HUH
RIGHT. WHO NEEDS A DRINK?
OH, LORD! I HOPE THE COMPANY VISA IS PAID OFF
I AIN'T EVEN GOT TO THE PART ABOUT THE FANCIER THING AND THE STAPLES YET.
Photos by JOHN PRENEY